spring offensive in France. It will be observed that I failed to persuade our Allies to take that course. The Chantilly plans had been agreed to by all the Allies at the Paris Conference in November. They were in the nature of a military Pact accepted by all the Governments concerned. The consent of all the signatories to the Paris Convention was necessary to secure any important change in its terms. France was implacable, Italy was indifferent. No strategical alteration was therefore possible without a serious conflict between the Allies. Ultimately the Conference agreed to the proposition which I have already quoted as No. 7 of its conclusions. This referred the whole question of a combined offensive on the Italian Front to those military experts who were already committed to the Nivelle plan.

This result was disappointing. When we came to the main purpose for which the Conference had been summoned—a real and not a sham co-ordination of strategy—the Conference reached no final decision and the military staffs were left in possession of the field. There were many reasons for that. The most important I shall examine in a separate chapter.

The professional bug

I shall here only allude to one of the chief obstructive elements—the bondage of professional etiquette. The professional deems it a point of honour to

stand by his brethren against all outsiders, including the facts. I have very little doubt that this is true of all the Military High Commands. I could see it operate in Rome. Cadorna, I know, favoured a combined offensive on the Italian Front, but he put up no fight for his idea, even when a British Prime Minister offered him an opening and an opportunity. Had